



TECHNICAL BULLETIN
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Bonus Rooms, Unfinished Rooms, Accessible Attics, Attics
Used for Storage, Etc.

This Tech Bulletin establishes the differences between bonus rooms, unfinished rooms, accessible attics, an attic used for storage, etc. and establishes the permit submittal, inspection and code requirements of each. A room or area will be classified as “habitable” or “non-habitable” to distinguish the differences. All rooms must be labeled with a definitive proposed use. Labels such as “Bonus Room or Bedroom Option” are not acceptable because of different code requirements of each use.

A. Any space or floor area that is provided with heating and/or cooling ducts is considered as “habitable” floor area of the structure. That space or floor area must be included in the total floor area of the permit application and must be comply with the following code requirements:

1. The space or floor area must be included as part of the conditioned floor area on the energy compliance approach.
2. The envelope of the space or floor area must be insulated and sealed to prevent air infiltration as required for all other conditioned spaces.
3. The walls of the envelope or floor area must be provided with electrical outlets as required for habitable rooms.
4. Non metallic sheathed cable wiring must be placed in conduit or protected by sheetrock.
5. Smoke detectors required as per code for the space or floor area.
6. If plans show provisions for future plumbing fixtures then the minimum DWV and water piping must be roughed and capped.
7. Any windows installed in the space or floor area must satisfy the energy code requirements for the approached utilized.
8. The area may remain unfinished with respect to floor coverings, texture and paint.

B. Any attic space that is not provided with heating and/or cooling ducts and is accessible with a **fixed** stairway is considered “non-habitable” and must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The floor/ceiling joists of the attic space that is decked for storage shall be sized as floor joists (Table R502.3.1(1) of the IRC).
2. The attic space will be provided with a smoke detector meeting all other code requirements.